

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 24 – 28 and new claims 29 – 33 are pending, with claim 24 being independent. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1 – 6, 9, 11 – 17, and 19 – 23 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. New claims 29 – 33 have been added, dependent on claim 24. Support for the new claims may be found throughout the specification, including in the original claims; therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 24 – 28 are allowed. As the new claims are dependent upon claim 24, previously indicated as allowable, Applicants respectfully assert that the new claims raise no new matters for examination.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103

Claims 1-6 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,641,411 (“Williams”). Claims 1-6 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Union Carbide in view of acknowledged prior art for the reasons of record set forth in the prior Office Action in further view of Williams. Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, claims 1 – 6 and 11 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, thus obviating the rejections.

Claims 1-6, 9, 11-17, and 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Union Carbide in view of acknowledged prior art, U.S. Patent No. 4,686,317 (“Quann”) and U.S. Patent No. 3,642,578 (“Hitzman”) for the reasons of record set forth in the prior Office Action in further view of Williams. Without conceding the propriety of these rejections, claims 1 – 6, 9, 11 – 17, and 19 – 23 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, thus obviating the rejections.

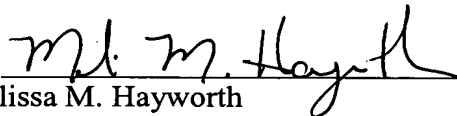
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

Conclusion

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1 – 6, 9, 11 – 17, and 19 – 23 have been canceled merely to expedite allowance of claims 24 – 28. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, allowance of claims 24 – 28 and new claims 29 – 33 is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number, if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 
Melissa M. Hayworth
Registration No. 45,774

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Date: August 16, 2004